

## **'I love my brother, but...'**

Detective investigates officers' actions night woman was murdered

**By ANDREW HANON, EDMONTON SUN**

*Saturday, April 14, 2007*

Michael Butler says his younger brother began using drugs in Grade 7. "As far as I knew, Ken was just smoking weed," Butler says. Looking back, Michael now realizes that by the time Ken was 14 or 15, he had graduated to cocaine and was masterfully concealing an all-consuming drug problem.

But within a few years, Ken had spun completely out of control and was no longer able to hide his addiction. By then he was using crack and crystal meth.

Michael says that when Ken was 18 or 19, he was diagnosed with a mental illness following a particularly violent incident that involved police.

"It was awful," Michael says as he recalls the years of emotional abuse Ken hurled at his family -- the volatility, the lies, the manipulation, and the thefts to feed his increasingly ravenous habit. "It's such an evil course for a family to head down."

Ken is now undergoing a psychiatric evaluation following the savage beating death of his sister-in-law and a vicious assault that left a 61-year-old taxi driver in a coma last week.

No one has been charged in the killing of Stephanie Rae Butler, Michael's wife, but Ken remains the prime suspect.

He has been charged with aggravated assault in the attack on cabbie Pavan Chohan, who was found in a pool of blood half a block from Michael and Stephanie's Mill Woods house, where her body was later discovered.

Over the years, Michael says, his family tried desperately to get Ken help. He even hired his brother to work with him at his flooring installation business. But Ken's erratic behavior and crazy talk, peppered with violent allusions, was so frightening to clients that it was costing Michael business.

"I love my brother, but I had to put food on the table and pay the bills. It just wasn't going to work," Michael recalls.

On several occasions, Michael took his brother to rehab centres. But almost as soon as he arrived, Ken was back out the door. The longest he ever stayed in rehab was about an hour. But even if Ken had decided to stick it out in one of the three- to six-week addiction treatment programs available in Alberta, it probably wouldn't have done him a bit of good anyway.

Mental illness and addiction go hand-in-hand. About one-third of the people who check themselves into rehab are also battling some form of mental illness, from chronic depression to schizophrenia. It's known as concurrent disorders or dual diagnosis, and it's something that regular rehab centres do not have the facilities or expertise to handle. More often than not, people with concurrent disorders become substance abusers because of their illness - it's a process referred to as self-medication. Alcohol and drugs numb their pain or quiet the voices in their head.

Effective treatment for dual diagnosis addicts takes a long time, very specialized expertise and constant medical supervision, and there's only one facility in the entire province that's set up to deal with them.

And Alberta Hospital in Ponoka has only 10 beds for such cases.

City cops know all too well the horrendous toll addiction and mental illness take on society.

One cop, who spoke on condition of anonymity, lamented that while police are getting better training for dealing with people in this condition, "it's like they're saying, 'OK, now it's your problem.' "

Once he and his partner picked up a drunken, mentally ill man creating a disturbance who clearly needed detox and rehab, not jail.

"We drove around for two and a half hours, trying to find someone who could take him in," the cop said. "All the shelters were full. This guy had nowhere to go and it was 30 below. Clearly, we need more facilities of all kinds - shelters, detox and appropriate treatment."